



South Mountain Corridor Study

Citizens Advisory Team

DRAFT Meeting Summary

Date: June 23, 2005
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: GRIC District 6 Komatke Center, Learning Center Meeting Hall

CAT Members Attending:

Rock Argabright, Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce
 Kris Black, Ahwatukee Foothills HOA
 Steve Boschen, Valley Forward
 Ben Buchsieb, Lakewood HOA
 Peggy Eastburn, Estrella Village Planning Committee
 Doris French, Laveen Village Planning Committee
 Michael Goodman, Phx Mtns Preservation Council
 Don Jones, Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce

David Lafferty, Tolleson
 Wayne Nelson, GRIC District 7
 Nathaniel Percharo, I-10 Pecos Landowners
 Laura Prendergast, Laveen Citizens for Responsible Development
 Michelle Pulich Stewart, Sierra Club
 Jim Strogon, Kyrene Lagos Elementary School
 Steve Williams, Maricopa County Farm Bureau

Staff and Consultants:

Michael Bruder, ADOT
 Matt Burdick, ADOT
 Kelly Cairo, GRA
 Chris Clary-Lemon, HDR
 Mike Dawson, Entranco
 Amy Edwards, HDR
 Ralph Ellis, ADOT
 Theresa Gunn, GCI
 Don Herp, City of Phoenix

Dan Lance, ADOT
 Bridget Schwartz Manre, City of Phoenix
 Elaine Mercado, ADOT
 Paul O'Brien, ADOT
 John Roberts, GRIC
 Steve Thomas, FHWA
 Bill Vachon, FHWA
 Steve Wilcox, DMJM+Harris

Citizens:

Betty Beard, Arizona Republic
 Michell Eastburn
 David Folts

Matthew Alan Lord
 Albert Pablo
 David Swisher

Lisa Percharo
 William Ramsay
 Mark Wakefield

ACTION PLAN:

Task/Activity	Who	When
Invite MAG representative to address specific traffic modeling questions.	Theresa	Next CAT meeting
Provide information to CAT for input if W55 and W71 alignments shift.	Amy	Future CAT meeting
Update CAT regarding project team presentation to the GRIC Tribal Council.	Amy	Next CAT meeting
Provide more briefings to the media.	Matt	ongoing
Provide more information regarding discussions with GRIC.	Amy	ongoing

Provided written comments on draft newsletter/fact sheet to Theresa via e-mail.	CAT	By June 30
Provide CoNexus® Demonstration for CAT	Theresa	Next meeting
Provide source of the new streets that are shown to exist on traffic volumes map and update maps based on comments.	Chris	Next meeting
Provide graphic representation of service interchange volumes information.	Chris	Next meeting
Determine if traffic volume maps take into account the price of gas/fuel in the future.	Chris	Next meeting
Provide City of Phoenix crime maps to CAT	Theresa	Next meeting
Review CoNexus® information.	CAT	Prior to next meeting

Welcome and Introductions

Theresa Gunn welcomed attendees to the meeting and explained that comments from public attendees would be accepted in writing, and if possible, responses would be provided at the conclusion of the meeting. She recognized new members and asked CAT members to introduce themselves.

Project Update

Amy Edwards provided a schedule update and addressed the MAG Model Area as follow up information from the previous meeting. Highlights included:

- The W55 and W71 alignments are under review. Once finalized, technical reports will be completed. If the alignments shift, the information will go to the SMCAT for input in July or August.
- Over the next four to five months, the project team will make technical report presentations to the CAT.
- Coordination with the Gila River Indian Community is ongoing. A presentation from the project team to the Tribal Council is scheduled for July 5. Information will be shared with the CAT at the July meeting.

CAT Member Questions/Comments:

Question: If the Tribe does not tell the project team that study on Community lands will not be allowed, how do you demonstrate the need to use Section 4(f) land? **Response:** At some point we would have to move forward, but we are not at that point yet. This would be a cooperative decision between ADOT and FHWA.

Comment: Loop 202 and I-10 widening issues are related, particularly to the I-10 Landowners Association.

Question: Are items such as the Borderlands Study included in the MAG traffic model?

Response: We propose that MAG representatives attend a future SMCAT meeting to address detailed issues.

Question: In comparing traffic models from 2025 to 2030, there are lower numbers.

Why? **Response:** This has to do with changes in trip generation inputs into the MAG model. MAG changed the number of trips generated from each home, based on a household survey, in the model which reduced the projected volume.

Follow Up from Previous Meetings

Gunn provided background information regarding a request from the CAT to meet privately to discuss issues, but not make decisions. Matt Burdick read and distributed a statement (attached) from ADOT regarding open meeting law and ADOT policy.

Primary points include:

- The Arizona Attorney General has concluded that the Open Meeting Law does not apply to a private group, such as the SMCAT.
- As a matter of policy and because ADOT is committed to as transparent a study process as possible, should the SMCAT choose to conduct a private meeting, ADOT (and its consultants) will choose not to participate.
- This ADOT philosophy is not exclusive to the South Mountain project.

CAT Member Questions/Comments:

Comment: If we have questions at a private meeting, they will have to go unanswered.

Comment: The problem is inaccurate reporting by the media.

Question: Are the GRIC meetings open meetings? **Response:** Meeting attendance is up to the discretion of GRIC.

Comment: We need to know the intent of the Tribe.

Comment: A jury is able to have a closed meeting and still get questions answered.

Question: Define non-participating. **Response:** ADOT will not attend.

Comment: When Mrs. Thomas asked that her comment not appear in the newspaper, those wishes were not respected.

Gunn asked if the media were not an issue, would the group want a closed meeting. The group indicated the main issue to close the meetings was due to inaccurate news articles. Burdick suggested that the SMCAT may wish to select one or more spokespeople.

CAT Member Questions/Comments:

Comment: Our role is to act as a litmus test regarding the issues under consideration.

Comment: I would rather keep meetings open. Sometimes the public or media don't get information right, but we have to accept that this occurs from time to time.

Comment: It may help to see information projected on a screen, such as having live notes for substantial items.

Comment: The Reservation is two sets of people, not just those on and off the Reservation; also the Pima and Maricopa. At our meetings, we can just drop an issue or say, “No comment.”

Comment: The meetings should be open.

Comment: The CAT is here for information and to share that information. Closing these meetings would also take away from our purpose. We need to focus on our purpose.

Comment: Some of us are not accustomed to speaking with the press present.

Gunn noted that the SMCAT specifically requested:

- More briefings from ADOT to the media;
- More information regarding discussions with GRIC; and,
- The availability of media training and spokespeople if desired.

In addition, Gunn asked members if they would like to proceed with open sessions. There was overall consensus to proceed with open meetings.

I-10 Collector Road Study

Gunn introduced representatives of the I-10 Collector Road Study, Steve Wilcox, DMJM+Harris, and Mike Dawson, Entranco. Wilcox provided an overview of the project, with highlights including:

- The study examines 22 miles of I-10, from approximately State Route 51 to the Santan Freeway.
- There is a congestion problem now at the Broadway curve, and it will be worse in the future
- A Collector-Distributor Road, or C-D Road, runs parallel to the freeway and has local interchanges for traffic exiting and entering the freeway. The existing freeway also becomes more efficient with less traffic interchanges.
- Two HOV lanes, and three to four lanes of C-D road would be added in each direction.
- Though the HOV connectors are not part of the Regional Transportation Plan, they will go into the design for later build-out.
- There are two to three entrances and exits for drivers to get from the C-D Road to the primary freeway in each direction.
- The SR 143/48th Street area would be completely redesigned.

CAT Member Questions/Comments:

Question: Why end the study at the Santan? **Response:** This is the area that would affect improvements to the Broadway curve.

Question: There could be a lot of confused drivers. **Response:** Signage will be important.

Question: What about using a double-decker design? **Response:** Other states successfully put HOV lanes up on stacks, which usually draws the regional traffic. In

this case, however, it would cost more to raise the lanes than to purchase the right-of-way. The option is still under consideration.

Question: Would more right-of-way be needed? **Response:** Yes.

Question: What is the timeline? **Response:** We look to have an approved EIS at the end of 2007, design in 2008, and begin improvements in 2008-2009.

Question: The area from 24th Street to Baseline seems like one segment. Will it be built in one-mile segments? **Response:** The mile-by-mile approach may not lend itself to this area, in part to keep traffic flowing.

Newsletter/Fact Sheet Input

Gunn requested input from CAT members on the draft newsletter/fact sheet information, particularly regarding the tone and any information that might be missing. Two members provided written comments and Gunn called for any other written comments by June 30. CAT member suggestions included:

- *p. 4, second paragraph* – Add timeframe issues, and that at some point a GRIC option will be taken off the table if there is no input.
- *p. 4, I-10 heading* – Add the following:
 - This option would be through a section of South Mountain Park/Preserve;
 - Without a GRIC alternative, this would be the alignment by default;
 - If there is not a GRIC alternative, and the no-build option is not selected, Pecos would be the alignment; and,
 - More information on interchanges at 40th, 32nd and possible impact, level of freeway, potential width of project
- *p. 4, Not building the freeway heading* – State that the issue would not necessarily be dead. A new study could start again.
- *global* – Be consistent on capitalization of question headings.
- *p. 4, CAT heading* – Add the following:
 - CAT is an advisory team and does not make the final decision;
 - More on the role of the CAT; and,
 - Information on who makes the final decision.
- *p.5, Where do we go from here heading.* Add the following:
 - More timetable information, through Record of Decision;
 - Sounds like there is little the public can do – explain options for input and what impact these meeting have on the final decision.

Additional Traffic Modeling Information

Chris Clary-Lemon reviewed traffic modeling information in four areas.

1. Revised Traffic Volumes Map

Clary-Lemon reviewed the revised traffic volumes map which incorporated CAT suggestions from the May meeting. He noted that the goal was to make this information easier for the public to understand and asked for additional input.

He responded to the following written question from the public:

- David Folts, Concerned Families Along South Mountain Loop 202.

Question: Do the vehicle projects you show for area highways in the future, also show traffic from the I-10 Reliever? If so, can you please show this projected highway on all future ADOT highway maps? **Response:** Yes, these maps assume that the I-10 Reliever – and everything specified in the RTP – is built.

CAT Member Questions/Comments:

Comment: Would like existing traffic volumes on map.

Comment: “0” for no-build option is confusing. Include existing arterial volumes.

Comment: Would like to see Queen Creek/SR347 information bubble added.

Question: The I-10 Landowners want to know the source of the new streets that are shown to exist on GRIC. **Response:** This is from publicly available databases. Clary-Lemon will determine the source and provide the information at the next meeting.

Comment: Add a bubble for US60.

Comment: The line type for future roads is the same as existing. **Response:** We can indicate future freeways in some other way, such as a dashed line.

Question: Where do cars go in the W55 no-build option? **Response:** We don’t know, this map doesn’t model that information.

2. Service Interchange Volumes

Clary-Lemon showed a chart comparing 15 interchanges for each of the W55/E1, W71/E1, and W101/E1 alignments. This is based on assumptions made in producing the MAG model. The interchanges are shown where they fit geometrically.

CAT Member Questions/Comments:

Question: Can this be shown graphically? **Response:** Yes.

3. Screenline Data

Clary-Lemon reviewed information that shows volumes on arterial streets using the screenline method.

CAT Member Questions/Comments:

Question: Does the model account for people avoiding the C/D? **Response:** Not sure, but the model does assume that it is built.

Question: What is a noticeable change in congestion? **Response:** Don’t know, but it seems like 25,000 vehicles taken off a freeway in rush hour would be substantial.

Comment: Construction on either a South Mountain Freeway or along the Broadway curve would affect traffic on the other freeway.

4. Arterial Street Volumes

Clary-Lemon reviewed arterial street volume maps. He noted that the legend showed the wording “without South Mountain Freeway,” instead of saying “no-build,” to help avoid confusion.

CAT Member Questions/Comments:

Comment: This shows more traffic at the 51st Avenue intersection, and won’t alleviate traffic there. **Response:** Yes, but there may be different results at different north-south points along 51st Avenue.

Co Nexus® Demonstration

Gunn announced that due to the time, the demonstration would be postponed until the July meeting.

Respond to Written Comments/Questions

Edwards responded to public questions and comments submitted, including:

David Folts, Concerned Families Along South Mountain Loop 202

- **Question:** If this highway is built and audible levels measured in Lagos school are higher than federal law allows (noise from highway) what will be done to alleviate this potential problem? Will sound readings be taken before and after the highway is built? Will ongoing sound testing be completed as traffic continues to build years in the future? **Response:** The Draft EIS includes noise analysis and mitigation information. Noise readings are also taken after a freeway is built. The ADOT noise policy exceeds the federal guidelines. (ADOT allows less noise).
- **Question:** At what point in the design or build out of a highway in Arizona is a survey done to find out what is under the earth/soil where the highway will sit? What type of readings are taken to see if rock, soil or other types of earth lie underground thus giving a clear picture on what must be removed for building highways. **Response:** During the EIS, geotechnical reports are reviewed. At the design phase, there is a complete report that includes borings.
- **Question:** In a previous meeting I think possibly by HDR Engineering, they stated that 4 million cu. ft. of soil would need to be removed under one of the alternatives as the highway runs through South Mountain Park. What would ADOT or the contractor do with all this soil, gravel and rock where would it go? **Response:** The figure is 4 million cu. yards of soil. The contractor uses as much as possible within the project and makes the final determination on any remaining materials.
- **Question:** Do the traffic volume maps take into account the price of gas/fuel one, two, ten and twenty years out? I ask this because the cost of fuel will have a very substantial effect on highway volumes as fuel reaches possible \$3 and \$4 a gallon price or beyond. **Response:** I don’t believe this is an assumption, but will find out.

- **Comment:** Don't forget to include the I-10 Reliever on the revised traffic volumes map. **Response:** This is included and appears on the copies of the maps, but unfortunately not on the map projected on the screen.

Matthew Alan Lord

- **Comment:** I hope that the SMCAT does not decide to hold closed meetings. They are responsible for making decisions governing the taxpayer's money and residents' communities. While inaccurate reporting in the press is unfortunate, that is a risk we take by having a free press. As a researcher and as a citizen, I urge the SMCAT not to hold closed meetings. Perhaps a better response is to write to the editors of the offending news outlet so that they can ensure accurate reporting in the future. Thanks!

David Folts, Concerned Families Along South Mountain Loop 202

- **Comment:** Two meetings ago a request was made for crime data in relation to existing highways. The SMCAT members were told there would be a six-month wait. Attached to this question are nine separate 2004 City of Phoenix crime density maps with major highways shown. Each map consists of separate crimes from homicide, auto theft, assault etc. Please make copies of these color key maps and hand them out to all the SMCAT members should they wish to view these.
Response: We will do so with the caveat to members that there may or may not be a correlation of crime to freeways.

CAT Member Questions/Comments:

Question: What about the 91st Avenue bridge? **Response:** We were told previously that this is in the long range plan for the City of Phoenix, however, it is not shown on a five-year construction plan.

Adjourn

Gunn requested that SMCAT members review the CoNexus information prior to the next meeting.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, July 28, 2005 at 5:30 p.m.

GRIC District 6 Komatke Center – Learning Center Meeting Hall.



Arizona Department of Transportation
Communication and Community Partnerships
206 South Seventeenth Avenue Phoenix, Arizona 85007-3213

Janet Napolitano
Governor

Victor M. Mendez
Director

Shannon Wilhelmsen
CCP Director

Review of Application of Open Meeting Law to the South Mountain Citizen Advisory Team

The South Mountain Citizen Advisory Team was formed in 2002 to gain an in-depth understanding of community concerns, provide input to the study team about potential effects to the community and act as a conduit for information between ADOT, Federal Highway Administration and community organizations.

Recently, some members of the South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team inquired about the possibility of holding a closed session prior to giving their recommendation for a preferred alternative on the South Mountain Corridor Study. As a result, the Arizona Department of Transportation requested a review from the Office of the Attorney General about the application of Arizona's Open Meeting Law to the South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team.

The Office of the Attorney General concluded that Arizona's Opening Meeting Law does not apply to the South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team because the group is a private, volunteer organization that was not statutorily created. The review concluded that the South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team has the discretion to conduct public or private meetings regardless of whether ADOT, consultant staff or consultant facilitators attend, make presentations, answer questions or only observe the meetings.

Although the Open Meeting Law requirements are not mandatory, the South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team is not precluded from adopting the procedures. ADOT also can make a decision that it will not participate in meetings unless they are open to the public.

If the South Mountain Citizen Advisory Team elects to hold a closed session, ADOT will discuss the possibility of providing an independent meeting facilitator not connected to the study, if requested. However, ADOT and the consultant study team staff will not participate in the meeting to avoid any perception that ADOT made decisions behind closed doors.

ADOT is committed to open, transparent and inclusive processes that engage the public in the South Mountain Corridor Study. It is important that ADOT staff and its consultants conduct discussions in an open forum, respond to public concerns and are accountable for decisions made.

ADOT highly values the input and ongoing commitment from the members of the South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team. Your involvement in the study process is vital to discuss community concerns in the South Mountain Corridor, identify ways to address challenges and recommend solutions.

We greatly appreciate your continued support and involvement in the South Mountain Corridor Study and applaud you for the many hours of your own time that you have devoted to this process.

